

# **Don't Look**

## **Miniatures**

## Don't Look by Miniatures

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**Summary:**

Or, It's not dead, and neither are Eddie's feelings.

## Don't Look

When Eddie sees him again, it hurts. *You bet your fur it hurts*, he thinks, and grimaces. *Remembering always does.*

Things have been coming back in fragments, fixing and settling in his brain like they've always been there, stupid Eddie, how could you forget? But of course, they haven't always. Eddie hasn't thought about Richie in years. And that's the salt of it, the rub, the alcohol pooling in the open wound—that he could *forget* something as momentous, as exquisitely painful as his first love.

Children love purely, he believes. Purely and stupidly, unclouded by the complications of adulthood. You become glued to people, and you love them, and sometimes you love them too much, but you pour your entire heart into it anyway because it's the most wholly awful, wonderful thing you've ever felt.

Eddie had loved Richie Tozier like that.

Richie Tozier, with his thick glasses and knobby limbs and unkempt hair. Richie Tozier, with jokes and joke voices tumbling from his trashy (*soft*) mouth. Richie Tozier, who pulled Eddie's face toward his with warm and sweaty hands, terror in his magnified eyes. *Don't look.*

Richie has grown into his nose. His frame is still lanky, but there's the swell of a belly outlined under his tee shirt. His dark hair is still thick and unruly. He wears contacts now, which is just fine by Eddie, because now his view of Richie's big, dark eyes is completely unobstructed. He smiles, and he laughs, and Eddie sees the boy still living inside him, peeking through like sunshine.

Eddie doesn't want to think about what Richie sees.

A slim man, a small man, a man with thinning hair. A man with a wedding ring on his left hand, wearing a groove in his finger. A man who's never dared to say the word *gay* above a whisper, because Myra loves him and he loves her, and so what if it's not a whole love after all? A man who knows that, despite his colleagues' cruel teasing, the reason he needs pills to love his wife has nothing to do

with her weight, or even his mother.

Well, maybe his mother a little.

It was *her* voice that stopped him all those years ago—another puzzle piece slotting neatly into place (*stupid Eddie*). That last bonfire in the Barrens, by the riverbank, when it was just Mike and Eddie and Richie and Bill left to remember. Mike and Bill went off to take a piss, and Eddie had stolen a look at Richie, at the firelight gleaming almost beautifully on his glasses. Richie smiled and said Eddie was cute when he stared.

And Eddie wanted, more desperately than he'd ever wanted anything before, to grab Richie Tozier and kiss him dizzy. It wasn't the first time, but it was the most powerful time—Eddie's heart thudding in his chest, his guts turning, his skin prickly with gooseflesh despite the heat of the fire. He was exhilarated by the imagined feel of Richie's mouth on his, all wet and soft and pink, and it would turn pinker after they kissed, like Bill and Mike's mouths looked when they came back from dates.

But Sonia Kaspbrak's voice blew like a foghorn through his brain. *Sick, disgusting—Eddie, don't you know fags are crawling with disease? But you're a good, clean boy, Eddie, my sweet boy, I know you know to stay away.*

It didn't matter what Eddie felt. It didn't matter how softly Richie was smiling at him. He leaned back and frowned, and told Richie not to call him cute like he was some girl.

Secretly, he wished he could be a girl. Just for one day, just to see—to be able to kiss Richie Tozier without having to be brave first.

But Richie isn't wearing a wedding ring. When Bill mentions his wife, when Bev mentions her ex, Richie doesn't pipe up with stories of *some girl*. Eddie knows this doesn't mean anything, he *knows*, but he can't help the greedy little thrill this fact drives through him. And when Richie winks at him and calls him Eds, and when Richie laughs and punches his arm like they're eleven years old again—Eddie is sure that forgetting Richie is the only thing that saved him from two decades of bitter regret. Because that whispered word is back again,

and Sonia Kaspbrak is quieter in the Loser's Club. Maybe that's why he was so sure he would never see Myra again. Maybe he knew, underneath it all.

Stupid Eddie.

He resolves to say something after they're done with It. He thinks he needs to face It first, to prove to himself that he can be brave again. *And that's okay*, Eddie thinks, smiling sidelong at Richie Tozier. *There'll be time enough when we're done.*

**Author's Note:**

So. It seems that I only needed to take a break from writing a mostly unread WIP for a fandom I'm only barely in anymore, not from writing in general.

Anyways have some Reddie